FRACTURED PART ONE

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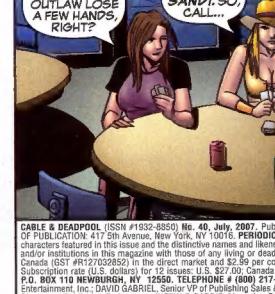
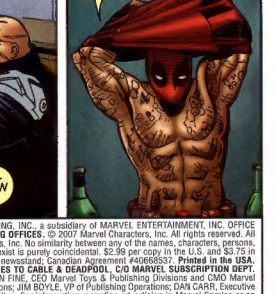
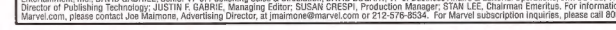
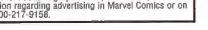
NASTY STUFF GOING DOWN ON CABLE'S SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND HAVEN OF PROVIDENCE.
ALMOST JEALOUS IT ISN'T A HYDRA OPERATION.
DON'T WORRY, BOB. YOU GUYS GET DIBS ON ORCHESTRATING THE NEXT ASSAULT ON HUMANITY. I'LL TAKE TWO.
THE CORPORATE JET IS BEING PREPPED, WADE. ONE'A THE PERKS OF WORKING FOR AGENCY X NOW.
STILL PLANNIN' ON FLYIN' OVER THERE?

WELL, I AM AN HONORARY X-MAN. OUTLAW. SORT OF.
AND THOUGH GAINFULLY EMPLOYED HERE, WADE WILSON, THE VAGABOND MERCENARY KNOWN AS DEADPOOL, IS VERY INTERESTED IN PRO BONO WORK.






--WHO HAVE UNSUCCESSFULLY SOUGHT TO DEFEND THE INNOCENT CIVILIANS FROM THE MIND-STEALING CREATURE KNOWN AS THE HECATOMB--
BUT NOT UNTIL ME AND OUTLAW LOSE A FEW HANDS, RIGHT?
AH, YOU NAILED IT, SANDI. SO, CALL...
TWO JACKS, HAIL, HYDRA!
TWO QUEENS. AND TWO TWINKIES. AND YOU REALLY HAVE TO STOP DOING THAT.
SORRY. REFLEX.
AH, CRAP. I GOT LOW HAND.



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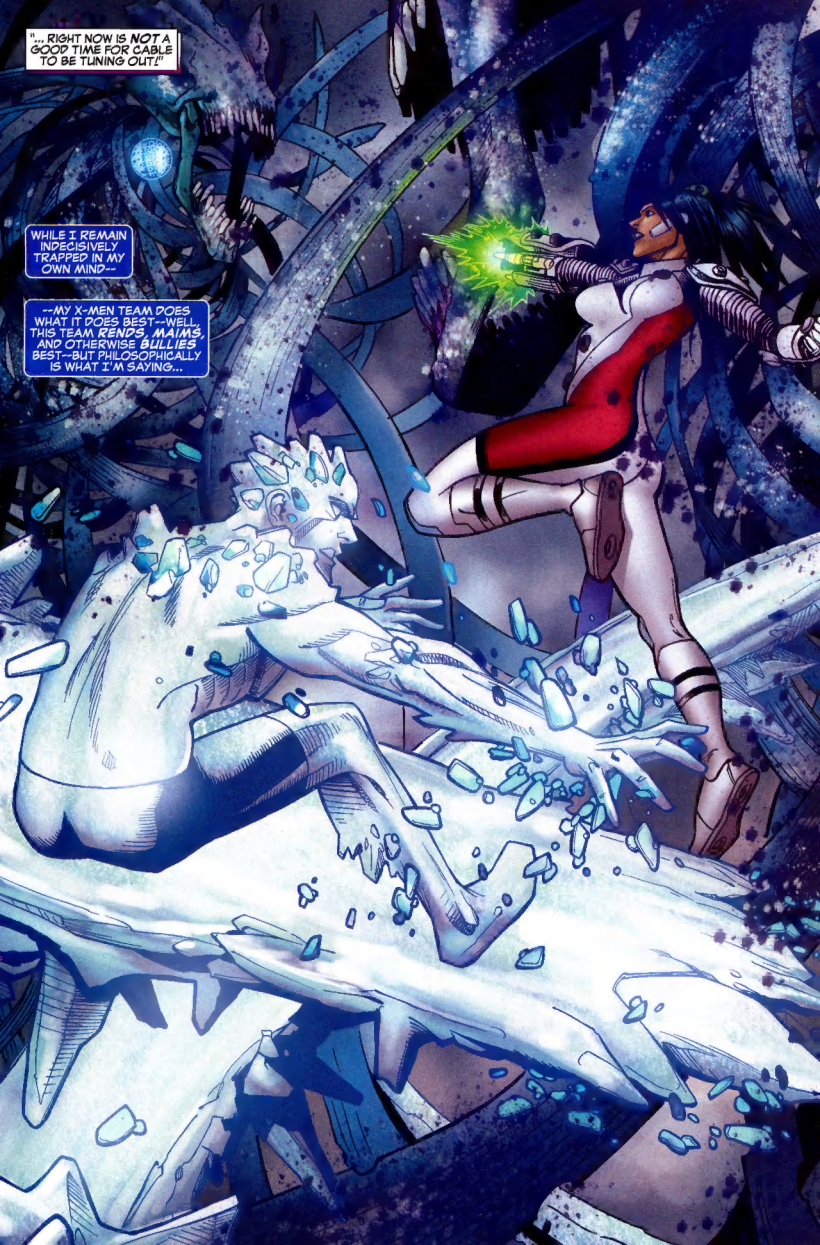
THE MIND PLAYS TRICKS.

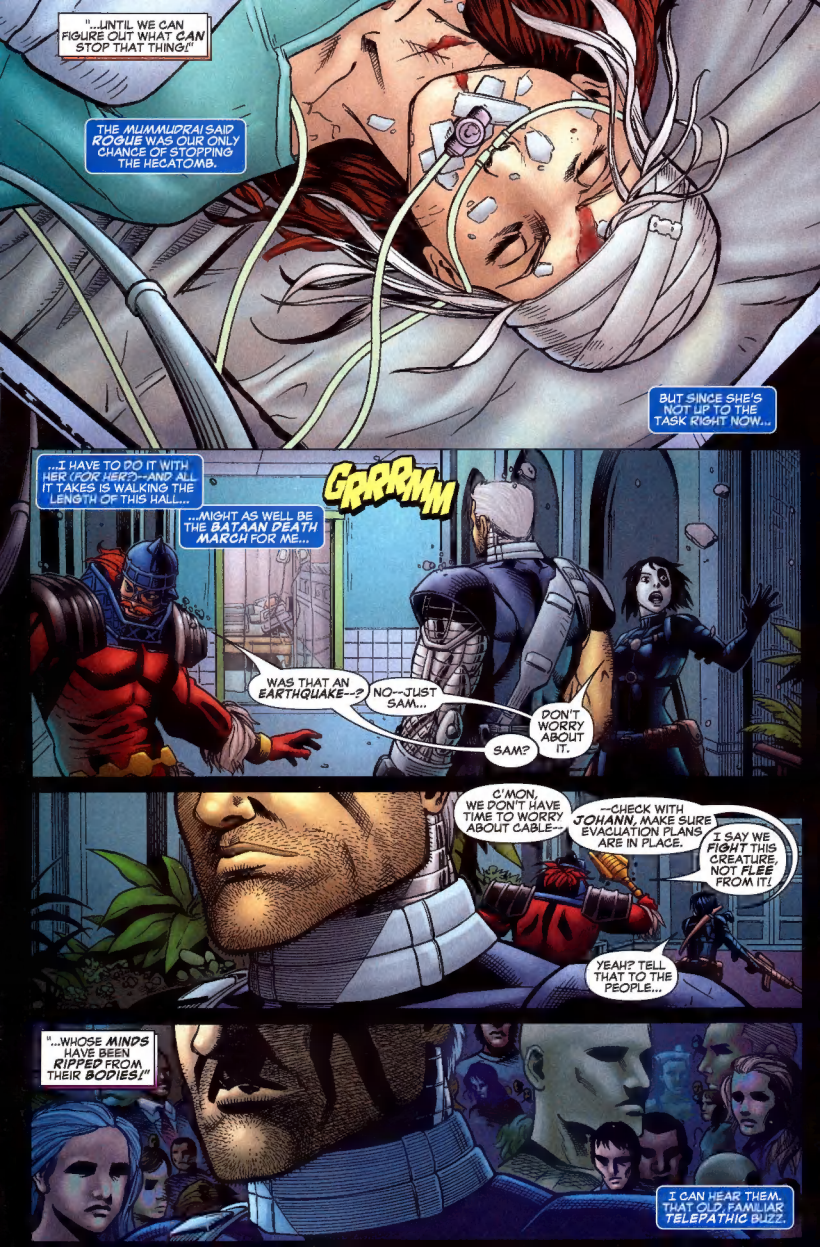
FOR A WHILE NOW, IT'S BEEN TELLING ME I CAN HELP CHANGE THE WORLD.
BUT ALL ALONG...SOME SCRATCHING SUBCONSCIOUS DOUBT KEPT REMINDING ME...
...ALL THAT I'LL EVER BE IS WHAT PEOPLE EXPECT OUT OF ME...
THAT'S IT?
YES, NATHAN DAYSPRING ASKANI'SON.
THAT IS HECATOMB, THE MIND-EATER. DEVOURER OF SOULS.
YOUR X-MEN DO NOT STAND A CHANCE.
YOU'RE A MUMMUDRAI, URIZEN--A TELEPATHIC LEECH--SO YOU'RE NOT MUCH BETTER THAN THE HECATOMB--
--BUT I AGREED TO SERVE AS YOUR HOST IN ORDER TO DEFEAT THAT SHI'AR WEAPON RUNNING AMOK ON MY ISLAND, SO--
--WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
WHAT YOU DO BEST...

WHAT I DO BEST? WHAT THEY ALL EXPECT OF ME.
AND WHAT ABOUT WHAT I EXPECT OF *MYSELF*...?
BLAM
INEVITABLY, IT DOESN'T MATTER MUCH...
...BECAUSE EVERYONE MAKES THEIR MINDS UP... "WHO YOU WERE IS WHO YOU ARE," OR "THIS IS WHO I WANT YOU TO BE"...
...EVERYONE HAS THEIR MINDS MADE UP, WHICH IS FUNNY...

...SINCE THE MIND PLAYS TRICKS ON YOU.
NATE!
NATE--?
DOMINO--HE APPEARS ENSORCELLED!
HE SHOWS UP WITHOUT NOTICE, DUMPING HIS X-MEN TEAM ON THE ISLAND--
--ONLY TO BE FOLLOWED BY SOME GLOWING ALIEN LIFEFORM THAT'S LEAVING PEOPLE LIKE HUSKS!
PERHAPS HE, TOO, HAS BEEN AFFECTED? I REGISTER SOME UNKNOWN ENERGY WITHIN CABLE...
...MY STELLAR ROD CRACKLES IN RESPONSE TO ITS VIBRATIONS...
JOHN, YOU REALLY...FORGET IT, NEVER MIND... YOU'RE A TIME-TRAVELER...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON... BUT WHAT I DO KNOW IS...

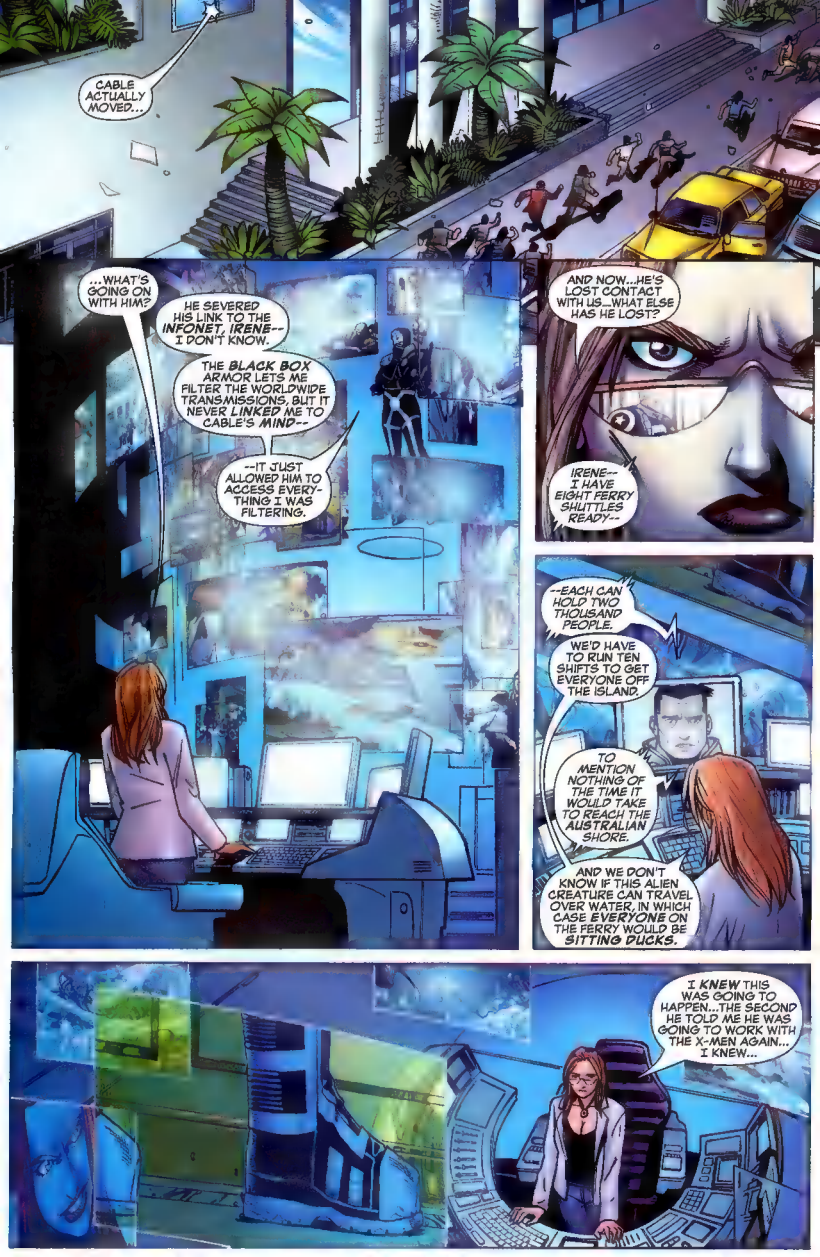

"... RIGHT NOW IS NOT A GOOD TIME FOR CABLE TO BE TUNING OUT!"
WHILE I REMAIN INDECISIVELY TRAPPED IN MY OWN MIND--
--MY X-MEN TEAM DOES WHAT IT DOES BEST--WELL, THIS TEAM RENDS, MAIMS, AND OTHERWISE BULLIES BEST--BUT PHILOSOPHICALLY IS WHAT I'M SAYING...

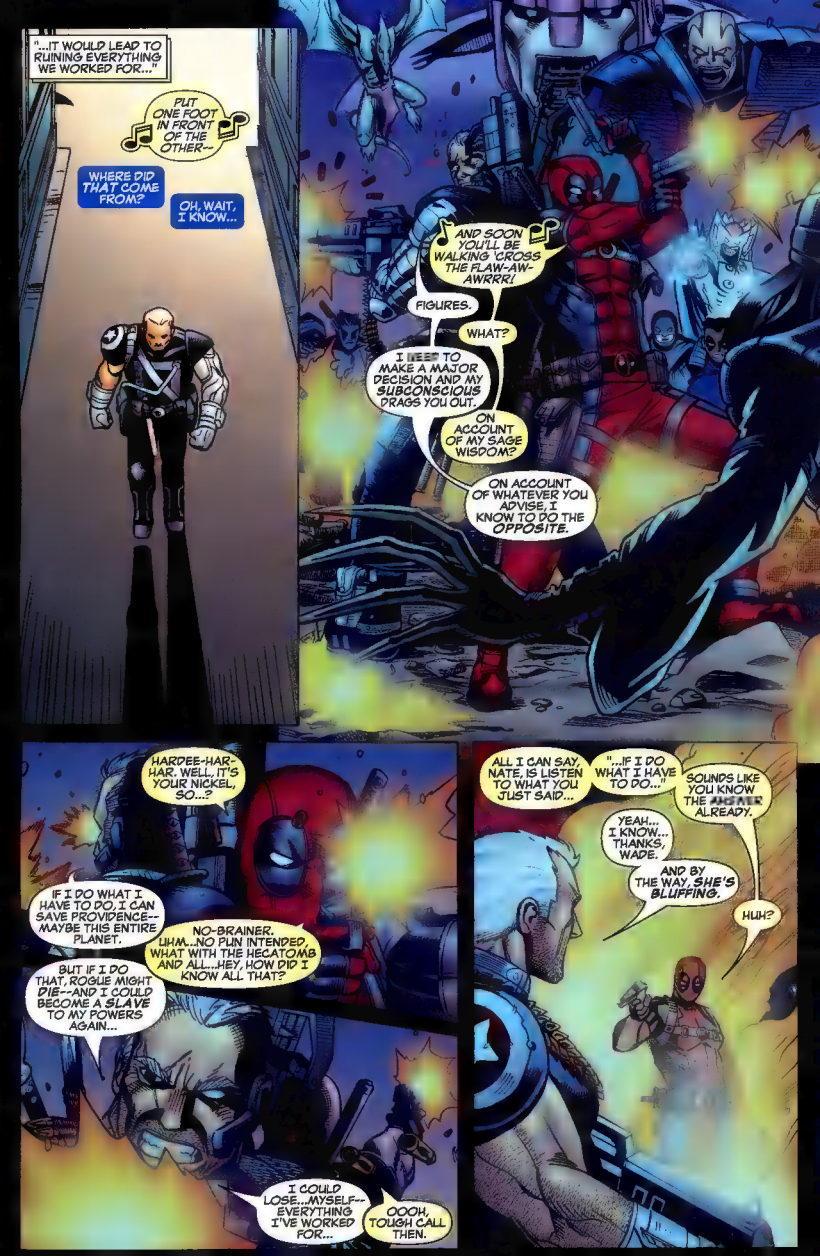
...THEY FIGHT TO STOP THE BAD GUY AND SAVE THE VERY PEOPLE WHO HATE AND FEAR THEM.
I NEED SOME BACKUP WHILE I PROTECT THESE PEOPLE!
CANNON-BALL--GIVE ICEMAN SOME COVER!
YEAH, MYSTIQUE, WOULDN'T'VE THOUGHT OF THAT. THANKS.
SQUAD'S GOT TOO MANY CHIEFS AN' NOT ENOUGH INDIANS...
SPEAKIN' OF--ANY SIGN OF CABLE?
NOT EVEN ON OUR COMM-LINK, SAM. YOU PLANNING ON A SHAKE 'N' BAKE?
YEAH. BETTER MAKE SURE THAT ICE SHIELD IS THICK ENOUGH...
...AH'M EXPANDIN' MAH BLAST-FIELD NOW!
HMM...
OH, LOVELY. POINTLESS STRUCTURAL DAMAGE. EVERY GOOD X-MEN BATTLE REQUIRES LITTLE BITS OF DEBRIS EVERYWHERE.
GUTHRIE, WE HAVE THE FIREPOWER TO AFFECT THIS THING.
AH AGREE--SO CONCENTRATE ON KEEPIN' THE PEOPLE SAFE...


"...UNTIL WE CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT CAN STOP THAT THING!"
THE MUMMUDRA! SAID ROGUE WAS OUR ONLY CHANCE OF STOPPING THE HECATOMB.
BUT SINCE SHE'S NOT UP TO THE TASK RIGHT NOW...
...I HAVE TO DO IT WITH HER (FOR HER)--AND ALL IT TAKES IS WALKING THE LENGTH OF THIS HALL...
...MIGHT AS WELL BE THE BATAAN DEATH MARCH FOR ME...
GRRRRMM
WAS THAT AN EARTHQUAKE--?
NO--JUST SAM...
SAM?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
C'MON, WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT CABLE--
--CHECK WITH JOHANN, MAKE SURE EVACUATION PLANS ARE IN PLACE.
I SAY WE FIGHT THIS CREATURE, NOT FLEE FROM IT!
YEAH? TELL THAT TO THE PEOPLE...
"...WHOSE MINDS HAVE BEEN RIPPED FROM THEIR BODIES!"
I CAN HEAR THEM. THAT OLD, FAMILIAR TELEPATHIC BUZZ.

IT'S BECAUSE I HAVE THE MUMMUDRA!
ALREADY, IT'S RE-ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTIONS THAT HAD BEEN SEVERED INSIDE ME...
...RESTORING MY MUTANT ABILITIES... MY TELEPATHY AND TELEKINESIS---AND A PART OF ME WANTS THAT...
...BUT ANOTHER PART KNOWS IT WILL DESTROY EVERYTHING I HOPED TO DO.
THE POWER... IT'S A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD... AND I ALWAYS END UP CUTTING MYSELF...
WITHOUT IT, I PLANNED TO CHANGE THE WAY THE WORLD THINKS AND OPERATES---THROUGH ACTIONS AND IDEAS, RATHER THAN THE BLUNT END OF A MUTANT STICK.
MAKE IT WHAT IT ALWAYS COULD HAVE BEEN. THE DREAM I HAD OF WHAT IT SHOULD BE.
A DREAM THAT WAS CRUSHED TIME AND AGAIN... BUT NEVER LOST.

AND THE ONLY THING STOPPING ME FROM ACHIEVING THAT DREAM OF TOMORROW...
...IS THE REALITY OF SAVING THE WORLD TODAY.
I HEAR THEIR CALL. BUZZING. TRAPPED IN THE HECATOMB. PLEADING FOR HELP.
TO RELEASE THEM FROM THEIR PRISON...
...I HAVE TO WALK INTO A CAGE.
WITH A TIGER IN IT.
AND THEN THROW AWAY THE KEY.
AND...
I DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE, DO I?


CABLE ACTUALLY MOVED...
...WHAT'S GOING ON WITH HIM?
HE SEVERED HIS LINK TO THE INFONET, IRENE-- I DON'T KNOW.
THE BLACK BOX ARMOR LETS ME FILTER THE WORLDWIDE TRANSMISSIONS, BUT IT NEVER LINKED ME TO CABLE'S MIND--
--IT JUST ALLOWED HIM TO ACCESS EVERYTHING I WAS FILTERING.
AND NOW...HE'S LOST CONTACT WITH US...WHAT ELSE HAS HE LOST?
IRENE-- I HAVE EIGHT FERRY SHUTTLES READY--
--EACH CAN HOLD TWO THOUSAND PEOPLE.
WE'D HAVE TO RUN TEN SHIFTS TO GET EVERYONE OFF THE ISLAND.
TO MENTION NOTHING OF THE TIME IT WOULD TAKE TO REACH THE AUSTRALIAN SHORE.
AND WE DON'T KNOW IF THIS ALIEN CREATURE CAN TRAVEL OVER WATER, IN WHICH CASE EVERYONE ON THE FERRY WOULD BE SITTING DUCKS.
I KNEW THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN...THE SECOND HE TOLD ME HE WAS GOING TO WORK WITH THE X-MEN AGAIN... I KNEW...


"...IT WOULD LEAD TO RUINING EVERYTHING WE WORKED FOR..."
PUT ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER--
WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?
OH, WAIT, I KNOW...
AND SOON YOU'LL BE WALKING 'CROSS THE FLAW-AW-AWRRR!
FIGURES.
WHAT?
I NEED TO MAKE A MAJOR DECISION AND MY SUBCONSCIOUS DRAGS YOU OUT.
ON ACCOUNT OF MY SAGE WISDOM?
ON ACCOUNT OF WHATEVER YOU ADVISE, I KNOW TO DO THE OPPOSITE.
HARDEE-HAR-HAR. WELL, IT'S YOUR NICKEL, SO...?
IF I DO WHAT I HAVE TO DO, I CAN SAVE PROVIDENCE--MAYBE THIS ENTIRE PLANET.
NO-BRAINER. UHM...NO PUN INTENDED. WHAT WITH THE HECATOMB AND ALL...HEY, HOW DID I KNOW ALL THAT?
BUT IF I DO THAT, ROGUE MIGHT DIE--AND I COULD BECOME A SLAVE TO MY POWERS AGAIN...
I COULD LOSE...MYSELF... EVERYTHING I'VE WORKED FOR...
OOOH, TOUGH CALL THEN.
ALL I CAN SAY, NATE, IS LISTEN TO WHAT YOU JUST SAID...
"...IF I DO WHAT I HAVE TO DO..."
SOUNDS LIKE YOU KNOW THE ANSWER ALREADY.
YEAH... I KNOW... THANKS, WADE.
AND BY THE WAY, SHE'S BLUFFING.
HUH?

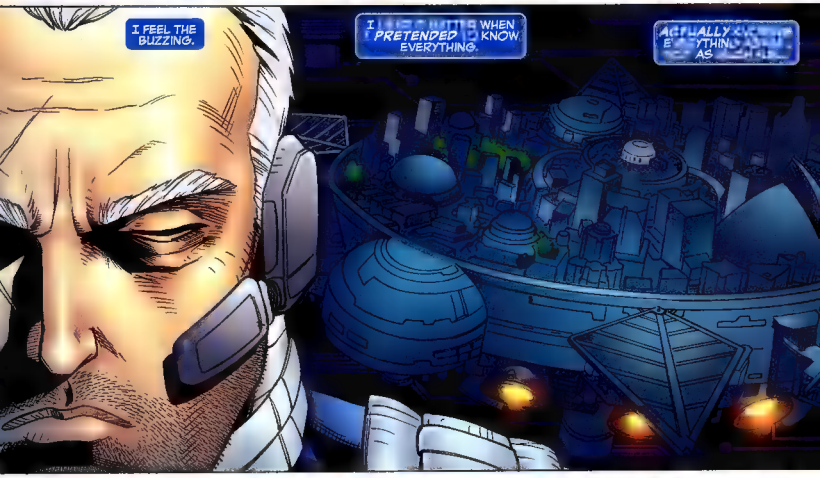
AGENCY X
HELLO--? WADE?
HUH?
YOUR TURN. YOU COMPLETELY ZONED OUT THERE.
YEAH...
I CALL!
DRAT AND FIDDLESTICKS! HOW'D YOU KNOW I WAS BLUFFIN'?
--ALL COMMUNICATIONS WITH PROVIDENCE ARE BEING AFFECTED--
LUCKY GUESS...I GUESS...
VERY. VERY. VERY LUCKY...

THEY FIGHT THEIR LIVES MANY
...WHO ARE ON THIS ISLAND THAT I MADE... BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED IN ME.
OR JUST WANTED IN ME. BE THING.
I TH COULD BE. REALLY
NOW...I'LL NEVER GET THE CHANCE.
BE WHAT ALWAYS HAVE BE WHAT NEED ME BE.
TRAGIC, TORTURED G...!.
OVER-POWERED MUTANT MESSIAH.
SUCH EXTREMES TO WHO I REALLY AM. WHO I'VE ALWAYS BEEN, IF ANYONE HAD BEEN PAYING ATTENTION.

SHOOT IT!
KILL IT!
IT TOOK OUR MINDS!
HELP US!
I CAN FEEL THE BUZZ GETTING WORSE.
DEADPOOL CALLED HER BLUFF. HE'S HAPPY.

BULLSEYE JUST KILLED SOMEONE. AGAIN.
THE FERRIES WON'T WORK. TELL EVERYONE TO HANG TIGHT ONTO SOMETHING
THE FERRIES WON'T WORK.

THE FERRIES WON'T WORK. TELL EVERYONE TO HANG TIGHT ONTO SOMETHING.
I DON'T UNDER-STAND--


I FEEL THE BUZZING.
I PRETENDED TO KNOW EVERYTHING.

BBBBLAAAAM

WAS THAT YOUR SAM GUTHRIE USING HIS POWERS AGAIN?
NO...
IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?
CABLE...
GRAVITY-PLATING FIELDS HAVE SHUT DOWN--
--THE LOWER HALF OF THE ISLAND IS CUT OFF--
--IRENE--WHAT'S HAPPENING?
NATE...
"... NATE IS TRYING TO SAVE US ALL..."
BROUGHT
TOGETHER.
TO SAVE AS MANY THEM AS I CAN--IF HAVE TO CAN TEAR THE
(OKAY, THANKS MY LITTLE MUMMUDRA! MINDWORM.)

ABOUT EIGHTY [illegible] OF THE ISLAND'S [illegible] SAFE. [illegible] NOW.
BUT NOT FOR LONG IF THE HECATOMB ISN'T STOPPED.
HAVE [illegible] THE OUTSIDE [illegible] NOW.
IT FEELS---AS USUAL--- AS IF I'VE BEEN AGONIZING FOREVER.
[illegible] BEEN [illegible] TO [illegible] WHEN IT COMES TO MAKING THE [illegible]
SOMETIME IN THE [illegible] KILL [illegible] I [illegible] CHAD
LET'S GO. OUR FELLOW X-MEN ARE IN TROUBLE!
YOU CAN TRY TO FIND ANOTHER WAY. YOU'LL LOSE SO MUCH...YOU'LL LOSE ME...
I'M BEING SELFISH, I KNOW.
[illegible] SAVIOR THROUGH A CAREFULLY [illegible] TO [illegible] AND [illegible] THE HUMAN [illegible] IS MUCH [illegible] ...FUN...
...THAN THA[illegible] IN STORE ME[illegible]T.

COULD BE WRONG, OF COURSE.
HE RARELY IS.
BUT HE KNOWS WHAT HE HAS TO DO. HE'S A LOT OF THINGS, YEAH, BUT STAND-UP RESPONSIBLE IS FRONT OF THE LINE.
HOW ABOUT SOMETHING FOR HIMSELF--FOR ONCE--?
ENOUGH.
ENOUGH!
DOM...

NATE--?
I'M SORRY...
EMERG

SEVEN MINUTES REAL TIME.
I'VE WAITED LONG ENOUGH.

I DO WHAT I HAVE TO DO.

WHAT YOU ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO DO.

DOESN'T MEAN I HAVE TO LIKE IT.
I WALK.

THEN I START RUNNING.
RUNNING TO THE END OF ME.
NOW I'M GETTING AN INCREDIBLE ENERGY SURGE COMING FROM THE HOSPITAL...
...IT'S HIM...
NATE...
YOU HEAR LIKE--SOME SORT OF--BUZZING--?
YEAH.
YOU KNOW WHAT THAT IS--?
YEAH.

I THOUGHT I'D GET A CHANCE TO CHANGE THE WORLD.
INSTEAD, I JUST GET THE CHANCE TO SAVE IT.
DON'T EXPECT TOO MANY SMALL VIOLINS TO BE PLAYED ON MY BEHALF.
YOU'D ALMOST THINK SOMEONE WAS PULLING THOSE STRINGS--
--REUNITING ME WITH THE X-MEN JUST SO I'D BE PUT INTO THIS KIND OF A SITUATION.
THAT'S NOT REASONABLE, RIGHT? WE ALL MAKE OUR OWN CHOICES, DON'T WE?
I'M NOT REALLY SURE ANYMORE.
THE MIND PLAYS TRICKS ON YOU...
CONTINUED IN X-MEN #199!
NEXT: A DREAM DESTROYED!
AND DEADPOOL VS. SABRETOOTH!